

help all of us. And we have a moral responsibility to insure that people who work are not living in poverty.

As we emphasize the importance of moving people off welfare and onto work and the Congress begins that debate, we should not lose at all the simple fact that a decent hourly wage cuts through a sea of Federal benefits programs and elaborate job-training programs to provide a firm hand of support.

The President has taken the lead in making work pay for all Americans. This Congress must respond to that challenge.

□ 1020

#### PASS THE LINE-ITEM VETO

(Mr. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, Monday will be the birthday of a great man—President Ronald Reagan. Monday will also be the day that we vote on the line-item veto. Over the last 40 years this body has stood idly by as we have passed a \$4.5 trillion national debt onto our children and grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, we must end this lavish spending now, and the line-item veto will help us do so.

The line-item veto will empower the President to rid legislation of wasteful spending, forcing each expenditure to survive public scrutiny and survive on its own. President Ronald Reagan had it right when he said that the line-item veto would allow the President "the right to reach into massive appropriation bills, pare away the waste, and enforce budget discipline."

The greatest gift we could give to one of the greatest Presidents of modern history is the line-item veto. Let us win one for the gipper. Let us win one for the American people. Let us pass the line-item veto.

#### THE GOLDEN GRAB AWARD

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, for more than a decade I had the honor of chairing the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. That subcommittee regularly exposed waste, fraud, and abuse committed at the taxpayer's expense. We found defense contractors charging \$600 for toilet seats, and billing the Government for the expense of boarding dogs. Environmental contractors who were supposed to clean toxic waste sites were instead wasting taxpayer money on lavish parties, reindeer suits, and clown costumes. Universities used Federal research dollars to pay for yachts and 19th century Italian fruitwood commodes. The Nation's Governors were baldly raiding Medicaid funds to build prisons, pave roads, or cut their own deficits.

The experience of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee teaches us that behind almost every wasteful Government project, questionable Government contract, or skewed Government regulation stands a long line of interests, palms extended. The entertainment industry honors excellence with its Golden Globe Awards. To honor excellence in bilking the taxpayer, I am today announcing the Golden Grab Award.

We will be giving such awards periodically, a statue of a human hand, palm out, extended.

I expect that the 104th Congress will give us a wealth of candidates for the Golden Grab. Already, Rupert Murdoch has shown that he can collect world leaders with book contracts the way children collect baseball trading cards.

Nominations are now open for the inaugural award. Winners will have their names engraved on a statue in the form of an outstretched hand, palm up.

#### BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

(Mr. BASS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Budget Committee and as a former member of the New Hampshire State senate, I know what it is like to balance budgets in good and also in hard times. That is why we passed a balanced budget amendment and sent it on to the Senate. That is why we passed an unfunded Federal mandate bill despite the dilatory tactics of a small minority of Members of this House. And that is why we will pass a line-item veto for the President.

Mr. Speaker, Orange County may be bankrupt, but so is the Federal Government, and it is time that we move to complete the third leg of the stool of accountability of Congress and to move to give the President the line-item veto so that each and every line of our budget is subject to justification in this House. So let us get on with it and pass the line-item veto on Monday.

#### WORKING FOR WORKERS' DIGNITY: THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. VENTO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, the Congress has the responsibility to help working families earn a living in the world of work. Today the minimum wage has slipped to the lowest value in decades. Men and women who are struggling to support themselves and their kids and American families are falling further behind. Unemployment is low, but many that are accepting jobs are receiving substandard wages and taking these jobs but not making ends meet. America needs a fair minimum wage. Decency demands that Congress act to give a fair shake to American workers.

The single parents, the persons trying to be able to make a living on his or her job, not with a government support program. The best welfare program is a job.

Action to raise the minimum wage, itself, helps workers, not a trickle-down political promise program to cut taxes for the rich, but social justice for workers on the job in America today.

Fairness and decency demand congressional action to make a work pay. Let Congress Act to increase the minimum wage and be fair to the working people we represent.

#### LINE-ITEM VETO IS LONG OVERDUE

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, Christmas might come just once a year to most people in the country, but up here in Washington, land of plenty, the legislative Christmas tree shines all year long. Why? Because Congress for years has been practicing pork barrel politics.

In the past, Members have been able to hang their own little ornaments on appropriation bills, best known as Christmas trees which resulted in huge payoffs to someone back in their district. Unfortunately these ornaments cost the taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars while only benefiting a select few.

But with the passage of a line-item veto, we are finally going to give the President of the United States the same power to remove these costly ornaments. Line-item veto will allow the President to enjoy the same authority as 43 Governors including my own Governor in Illinois, already practice. With line-item veto, we will end the long reign of pork barrel politics. This bill is long overdue.

#### DEMOCRATS WILL FIGHT FOR A FAIR MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. GEPHARDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, over these past 2 years, President Clinton and the Democratic Party have been fighting for a single fundamental goal: To raise the standard of living of America's working families. Everything else is secondary to that goal. And if you are one of the millions of Americans who try to support a family on the minimum wage, your real wages have plummeted by almost a third since 1979.

How can you raise a family on \$8,500 a year? That is why it is time to raise the minimum wage by 90 cents to lift up those who have been falling behind, to make work pay more than welfare, because too often that is just not the case today. We know that a minimum